

# Demystifying the Season of Putsch in Africa's Sahel: Gaining Insight into Niger's Dynamics

**Frederick Appiah Afriyie**

Research Center for Analysis and Security Studies(RECASS)-Ghana  
kaaf0712@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.35293/srsa.v46i1.5005>

## Abstract

In the past three years, the African continent has experienced a notable upswing in military coups, particularly in Nations like Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad, and Mali. The Greater Sahel Region has emerged as a global focal point of concern, grappling with issues of inadequate governance, extremism, and violence. Despite the efforts of regional bodies such as ECOWAS, military takeovers persist, posing challenges to democratic processes and heightening the threat of increased terrorism. Since 2020, Niger, a landlocked nation that was once a French colony, has faced its 13th coup attempt, contributing to increased instability in West and Central Africa. Despite robust regional opposition, the junta in Niger persists in power, highlighting the difficulties of overturning a coup. This situation carries geopolitical implications, risking U.S. security assistance to Niger and prompting neighbouring countries to strengthen ties with Russia post-coups. The Secretary of State cautions about potential consequences, underscoring the region's reputation as the 'coup capital of the world'. The July 2023 successful coup in Niger not only jeopardises the country's progress under civilian leaders but also heightens the risks of insecurity, economic crises, and political instability. The Sahel, known as a hub of terrorism, faces increased concerns as Niger's strategic importance in countering extremism diminishes due to the coup. This event jeopardises Niger's standing as a democratic stronghold and a deterrent against jihad and Russian influence in the region, accentuating the broader challenge of stabilising the Sahel amid intricate socio-political and security issues. This article aims to illuminate the root causes and consequences of conflict and political instability in the region. Specifically, it seeks to address fundamental questions such as the factors leading



to the current political instability and the repercussions of this conflict for Niger and the broader Sahel region. The answers to these questions offer insights into resolving the present challenge.

**Keywords:** Niger, Coups, Sahel, ECOWAS, Gabon, Mali, Burkina Faso

## 1. Introduction

Over the past three years, there has been a notable surge in coups across the African continent, with military interventions occurring in Niger, Burkina Faso, Sudan, Guinea, Chad, and Mali (Duzor and Williamson 2023). The most recent military coup in Gabon, announced on 30 August 2023, occurred just one month after a military intervention in Niger that ousted the president (Isilow 2023). Data compiled by Powell and Thyne (2011) indicate that out of the 54 countries in Africa, 45 have experienced at least one coup attempt since 1950. Sudan holds the highest number of coup attempts, both attempted and successful, with eighteen incidents recorded in Powell and Thyne's data (Isilow 2023). In contrast, the greater Sahel region, marked by five successful military coups out of eight attempts, has become the focal point of a global crisis. This African region is grappling with military takeovers in countries facing challenges of poor governance, extremism, violence, and related issues. The prevalence of military rule exacerbates threats to stability and peace for the Sahel's population of 135 million, escalating the costs of human displacement, which are already at a record high. Additionally, it deepens the risk of intervention by external authoritarian powers, as highlighted by the United States Institute of Peace (2022).

Alternatively, a recent military coup in Niger, a landlocked former French colony, represents the thirteenth attempt to overthrow a government in Africa since 2020, with ten of them succeeding and causing destabilisation in West and Central Africa over the past three years, as indicated by researchers (Demuyne and Böhm 2023; Hjelmgard 2023). Niger's coup, the fifth since its 1960 independence, comes after warnings from regional leaders and international organisations like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) about the growing trend of African governments being overthrown. This trend poses a threat to democracy and undermines efforts to combat terrorism. Following the July 2023 coup in Niger, ECOWAS declared its intolerance for further takeovers, imposing stringent sanctions and threatening military intervention to restore the democratically elected government.

Abdel-Fatau Musah, the bloc's commissioner for political affairs and security, emphasised, 'The decision is that the coup in Niger is one coup too many for the region, and the organization are putting a stop to it at this time.'. Despite the united response from most West African nations, the junta in Niger persists in power, underscoring the challenges of reversing a coup once it has occurred (Duzor & Williamson, 2023). Be that as it may, the recent successful military coup in Niger poses a significant threat to the country's progress under its civilian democratic leaders. It exacerbates Niger's vulnerabilities to insecurity, economic crises, and political instability, as highlighted by the Africa Center for Strategic Study (2023). Members of Niger's presidential guard detained democratically elected President Mohamed Bazoum on 26 July 2023, asserting control over the government and suspending the constitution of the country with a population of 25 million. Protests against this unconstitutional seizure of power were forcefully suppressed. The motives behind the attempted coup remain unclear, but reports suggest it may have been instigated by the disgruntled departing head of the presidential guard who felt marginalised (Africa Center for Strategic Studies 2023). Similar to other coups in the region, justifications citing concerns over security and poverty have been presented to legitimise this extraconstitutional action (Africa Center for Strategic Study 2023). Also, the political unrest in Niamey, the capital of Niger, raises grave concerns about the future of the Sahel, a region that has emerged as the global epicentre of terrorism (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). This area accounted for 43 per cent of terrorism-related deaths in 2022, surpassing the combined figures for South Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. The Sahel faces a complex web of challenges, including inadequate governance, a lack of essential services, heightened competition for increasingly scarce natural resources, intercommunal tensions, escalating insecurity, and widespread displacement. Despite numerous international interventions over the past decade, the Sahel has witnessed a significant surge in terrorist violence (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). Until the recent seizure of power by a group of military leaders, Niger not only distinguished itself as the 'last bastion of democracy in the Sahel' but was also considered the final barrier against both jihadist influence and Russian sway in the region. In the face of deteriorating relationships with ruling military juntas in Mali and Burkina Faso, Mohamed Bazoum's democratically elected government had emerged as a 'new preferred partner' for Western allies. Situated at the intersection of the primary terrorist hotspots in the Sahel and the Lake Chad regions, Niger plays a pivotal role in containing the expansion of terrorist groups. Any further deterioration in its political and security situation poses a significant risk of exacerbating the arc

of instability that terrorists exploit (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). In contrast, the study utilised content analysis as its chosen methodology, concentrating on qualitative dimensions and depending on documentary evidence for gathering data. The decision to employ this method was mainly influenced by the qualitative nature of the study and the reliance on secondary data sources, underscoring the critical role of the content analysis process in the research. Against this context, the current investigation aims to address the following queries: (a) What factors contributed to the political instability? (b) What are the consequences of conflict and political instability in Niger?

## **2. Methodology of the Study**

To fully comprehend the key factors driving the coups in the Putsch in Africa's Sahel, the research methodology employed a literature review approach, consulting existing research on Putsch, internet sources, books, and reports from international bodies on military coups. The study did not utilise any primary data sources. The data gathered was qualitatively analysed in an objective manner to investigate the underlying causes of Putsch in Africa's Sahel region. As Morris (2009) noted, drawing from an extensive range of diverse sources enables rich qualitative analysis, allowing for a broad, thorough examination of a phenomenon. It provides a comprehensive, in-depth exploration of the topic under study.

## **3. Conceptual underpinning: democratic backsliding theory**

Democratic backsliding theory is the concept of the slow degradation of democratic norms, institutions, and practices within a system that's supposed to be democratic. It explains how an elected government can weaken the fundamental principles and checks and balances of democracy over time, usually through subtle and legal means, without completely doing away with democratic frameworks (Karolewski 2020; Bermeo 2016; Carothers and Press 2022). The coup in Niger, which is the sixth military coup in West Africa in the last three years and the country's fifth in the previous fifty years, is a noteworthy example of democratic backsliding in Africa (Reuters 2023; Annor 2023). This trend is part of a wider pattern of democratic backsliding across the continent, marked by the emergence of military rule and the weakening of democratic institutions and practices. Democratic backsliding theory suggests that the coup in Niger can be attributed to various factors, including politicians' failure to fulfil their promises, the

effects of insecurity and unaccountable governance, and internal power struggles and political rivalries (Okechukwu 2023). These elements have caused a deterioration in democratic institutions and practices, culminating in a military takeover. The coup in Niger is also part of a broader pattern of military coups in the region, driven by the influence of external actors, including Russia and its paramilitary mercenary Wagner Group (Annor 2023). The situation has become more complex due to the involvement of external actors who have supplied support and resources to the coup leaders, hindering the efforts of democratic forces to reclaim control. The coup in Niger has underscored the difficulties faced by regional organisations like ECOWAS in stopping and addressing military coups. Despite attempts to prevent such coups and reinstate ousted presidents, the absence of a regional military force within ECOWAS has made it challenging to effectively counter the increase in unlawful seizures of power (Annor 2023). In essence, the Niger coup signifies a notable instance of democratic erosion across Africa, attributable to a convergence of internal and external influences.

#### **4. A Broad Summary of African Coups**

According to Toyin Falola 2022, Africa has experienced more coups and military interventions than any other continent during the 20th and 21st centuries. These coups predominantly began shortly after the independence movements of the 1960s. To date, there have been over 200 coups, both successful and failed, across the continent. Consequently, Africa is often characterised by frequent coups, with approximately 41 countries having faced either successful or unsuccessful attempts (Barka and Ncube 2012). Hassan Isilow (2023) suggests that the recent spate of coups in Africa can be attributed to various factors, such as the absence of democratic governance, leadership shortcomings, economic instability, military ambitions, and widespread discontent among the youth and general population. Within Africa, West Africa has been particularly prone to coups, representing 51.3 per cent of the continent's coups between 1960 and 1969, 49.5 per cent from 1970 to 1989, and 53.7 per cent from 1990 to 2010. Overall, West Africa has accounted for 104 of the 200 coups recorded on the continent (Barka and Ncube 2012). The resurgence of coups in Africa, particularly in West Africa, between 2010 and 2022 has been alarming (Suleiman and Onapajo 2022). This resurgence is linked to the failure of democracy to take root and flourish in the region (Falola 2022). Factors such as widespread corruption, lack of free and fair elections, and escalating security crises contribute to this issue, leading to public

support for military interventions in politics. The contagious and concerning nature of these coups has prompted numerous calls for action from the international community, especially regional organisations like ECOWAS, to address this threat to democratic governance, security, and political stability. In response, ECOWAS has implemented various measures, including economic sanctions, diplomatic isolation, and suspending military leaders from international engagements. The resurgence of coups in West Africa has had significant political, economic, and security repercussions for ECOWAS. One clear consequence is the challenge to ECOWAS's ability to uphold democracy in the region. Scholars suggest that the frequent coups indicate ongoing democratic failures in West Africa (Barka and Ncube 2012; Falola 2022; Suleiman 2021; Suleiman and Onapajo 2022). These democratic shortcomings pose serious challenges for ECOWAS in its efforts to maintain regional peace and security. Additionally, there is criticism regarding ECOWAS's effectiveness in addressing coups, with some, like Brack (2022), arguing that economic sanctions tend to harm the populace more than the government. Thus, it is vital for ECOWAS to develop more effective strategies to mitigate coups in West Africa.

The occurrence of coups in Africa can be divided into three distinct waves, each with unique characteristics and consequences. The first wave emerged in the late 1950s and 1960s, aligning with the continent's decolonisation process. During this period, many newly independent nations experienced military interventions as they struggled with nation-building and creating stable governance structures. A notable example from this era is the 1963 coup in Togo, where soldiers led by Étienne Eyadéma (later Gnassingbé Eyadéma) overthrew President Sylvanus Olympio's civilian government. Eyadéma justified the coup by claiming it was necessary for political stability and economic development (Decalo 1976). This coup was significant as it was the first successful military overthrow in sub-Saharan Africa and marked the first assassination of a post-independence African leader. Consequently, this first wave led to an early reordering of Africa's post-independence political landscape (Atta-Asamoah 2023). The coups during this period were driven by the intense superpower rivalry of the Cold War and the rise of one-party states and dictatorships, prompting senior military officers to seize power. These coups were often violent, resulting in the deaths of twelve African leaders, extra-judicial killings, and widespread human rights abuses, especially in West Africa (Atta-Asamoah 2023; Duzor and Williamson 2023). Some coups were even praised for ending one-party states and lifelong presidencies (Atta-Asamoah 2023). For example, Nigeria experienced a series of coups in the mid-1960s,

starting with the January 1966 overthrow of the civilian government by young military officers, followed by a counter-coup in July led by General Yakubu Gowon. These coups were fuelled by ethnic and regional tensions and dissatisfaction with the civilian government's performance (Luckham 1971). Another significant coup occurred in Ghana in 1966, when Lieutenant-General Joseph Ankrah and the National Liberation Council ousted President Kwame Nkrumah, citing his government's authoritarianism, economic mismanagement, and abuse of power (Pinkney 1972). In Uganda, Prime Minister Milton Obote was overthrown in 1971 by a military coup led by Idi Amin, who claimed the need to fight corruption and restore order, though his regime later became notorious for its brutality and human rights abuses (Mutibwa 1992). These coups were driven by ethnic and regional tensions, ideological differences, economic challenges, and the pursuit of power, establishing a pattern of military interventions and contributing to political instability and authoritarian rule in many African countries during this era.

The second wave of coups in Africa began in the late 1990s and extended into the early 2000s, driven by the failure of African leaders from the 1980s, many of whom were military, to embrace democracy and address citizens' needs. This wave was primarily led by mid-level military officers who pledged to tackle economic mismanagement, unlike the first wave, which was led by senior military officers. While the motivations were similar to the first wave, the second wave saw fewer human rights abuses and accounted for only fourteen per cent of leader deaths. Despite this, these coups posed significant threats to African leaders and the continent's burgeoning democracy. In response, regional and continental norms were strengthened, leading to the Algiers decision on unconstitutional changes of government and the 2000 Lomé Declaration, which banned coup leaders from attending Organisation of African Unity summits and established a zero-tolerance policy against coups. These measures, along with the spread of democracy, significantly reduced the number of coups, marking the end of the second wave (Atta-Asamoah 2023). This period also saw a resurgence of military interventions in politics, particularly in West and Central Africa, driven by economic challenges, political instability, and weakening democratic institutions. Notable coups during this time included the 1999 coup in Côte d'Ivoire, where General Robert Guéï, who had been appointed leader of a military junta following President Houphouët-Boigny's death, overthrew the interim government of Henri Konan Bédié. Guéï claimed the coup was necessary for a fair electoral process but later annulled the 2000 presidential election results when he lost to Laurent Gbagbo (McGowan 2003). In the

Central African Republic, a series of coups and counter-coups took place between 2003 and 2005. François Bozizé, a former military officer, seized power in March 2003 by overthrowing the democratically elected president, Ange-Félix Patassé. Although Bozizé initially promised democratic elections, he postponed them and consolidated his control (Mehler 2009). In Mauritania, a 2005 coup led by Colonel Ely Ould Mohamed Vall overthrew President Maaouya Ould Sid'Ahmed Taya, with the coup leaders citing corruption, poor economic management, and suppression of civil liberties as their reasons (Pazzanita 2008). These examples from the second wave of coups in Africa highlight the ensuing periods of instability, human rights abuses, and additional military interventions, underscoring the detrimental impact on democratic governance and regional stability.

Furthermore, the third wave of coups in Africa has been ongoing since 2021, with instances recorded in Sudan, Mali, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Gabon. Unlike previous waves, the motivations behind these coups have been multifaceted and diverse. Some have been presented as efforts to restore democracy, while others have stemmed from concerns regarding democratic regression, constitutional violations, electoral fraud, deteriorating security, and growing anti-colonial sentiment (Atta-Asamoah, 2023). The coups in this wave have varied in their execution across different countries, with some orchestrated by elite presidential guards and others by the military. For instance, in Niger, after a decade of democratic governance since the 2010 coup, General Abdourahamane Tchiani led a military coup in July 2023, ousting President Mohamed Bazoum. ABC News (2023) reported that members of Niger's presidential guard detained President Bazoum inside his palace and announced on national television their seizure of power to address the worsening security situation and governance issues in the country. The ramifications of the July 2023 coup in Niger extend beyond its borders, generating tension in West Africa, particularly as the region has witnessed six coups in three years, posing a threat to hard-earned democratic advancements through an emerging trend of 'putschist-populist' politics (Melly 2023). Military intervention has been a recurrent feature in Niger's political landscape since gaining independence from France in 1960 (Aljazeera 2023). According to Choudhury (2023), the July 2023 coup in Niger reflects a blend of long-standing tensions and historical factors. He also noted that before the coup, allegations of electoral fraud and significant discontentment were prevalent against President Bazoum's government. Additionally, a failed coup attempt occurred in March 2021, just days before President Mohamed Bazoum's scheduled inauguration following his election. Neither the incumbent president nor the president-



elect were captured or harmed, and Bazoum's inauguration proceeded as planned (Chin and Kirkpatrick 2023). Nonetheless, President Bazoum remained in power until the July 2023 coup that ousted his government.

In September 2021, Guinea experienced a significant political upheaval when a military coup led by Colonel Mamady Doumbouya ousted the government of President Alpha Conde, citing reasons such as poverty and widespread corruption. Colonel Doumbouya assumed the role of interim president, pledging to facilitate a transition to democratic elections within three years. As part of the coup, he suspended the constitution, detained President Conde, and replaced regional governors with military commanders. Executive functions were temporarily transferred to the National Rally and Development, a body established by Colonel Doumbouya (Zulueta Fulscher and Noel 2021). Prior to this coup, Guinea's last democratic election was held in 2010, marking a historic moment since the country's independence from France in 1958 (Chin and Kirkpatrick 2023). President Alpha Conde gained notoriety for modifying Guinea's constitution in order to extend his tenure beyond the constitutionally mandated two terms. This alteration of the constitutional framework, coupled with President Conde's subsequent handling of the election process, significantly heightened political tensions within Guinea. According to Rosenje, Onyebuchi, and Adeniyi (2021), Conde's approach towards democratic principles, institutions, and culture was widely seen as disappointing and posed a serious threat to the consolidation of democracy. In October 2020, Conde pursued a third term in the presidential election after replacing the 2010 constitution with a new one in March 2020, effectively eliminating the two-term limit stipulated in the previous constitution (Boucher 2019).

In Mali, this led to the removal of French soldiers and sparked similar unrest in Niger. Following coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, foreign military groups like the Wagner Group have been employed to stabilise the nations. The third wave of coups in Africa has seen a shift in motives, with some aiming to reinstate democracy while others are driven by concerns about democratic decline, constitutional violations, fraudulent elections, worsening security, and growing anti-colonial sentiments. These coups have varied across countries, with some orchestrated by elite presidential guards and others by the military. They've mostly been relatively peaceful 'smart coups', executed with restraint, and ousted leaders have often been detained for differing periods before international pressure led to their release. The international aspect of these coups has focused on the involvement of external powers, often with an anti-imperialist tone, particularly against France. This has resulted in the expulsion of French troops from

Mali and similar tensions in Niger. Additionally, foreign military entities such as the Wagner Group have been deployed to ensure stability post-coup in Mali and Burkina Faso (Atta-Asamoah 2023).

Furthermore, from January 2022 to September 2022, Burkina Faso witnessed two successful coups. President Roch Marc Christian Kabore's government was overthrown in a military coup, leading to the installation of Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba as interim president. However, Damiba's tenure was short-lived as he too was ousted from his position by another military coup. Martin and Lebovich (2022) observed simmering discontent within the armed forces and tensions between the military and Kabore's democratically elected government for months leading up to the events. On January 24, soldiers detained President Kabore, dissolved the government and national assembly, suspended the constitution, and closed the country's borders, citing Kabore's alleged inability to address new challenges such as the escalating Jihadist insurgency, which had claimed thousands of lives (Munshi 2022). Eight months after Damiba's interim presidency began, another coup occurred on 30 September 2022, described by MacDougall (2022) as a 'coup within a coup'. Mutinous soldiers blocked roads near the presidential palace, and the state broadcaster RTB briefly went off the air (Maclean 2022). The ousting of Damiba and the dissolution of the interim government were announced on state television by Captain Ibrahim Traore, the 34-year-old leader of the coup, who promptly closed the country's borders and imposed a curfew (Rakotomalala and Chothia 2022). President Ali Bongo's rule in Gabon came to an end through a coup d'état on 30 August 2023. Just before the coup, he had been declared the victor of an uncontested election, aiming for a third term in power, which would have extended his family's six-decade-long rule. Despite being a stable autocracy, Gabon had experienced a failed coup in 2019 amidst a backdrop of both democratic and non-democratic changes across the continent. Similar to the CNSP in Niger, Gabon's military junta, known as the Committee for the Transition and Restoration of Institutions, announced plans to establish a transitional government. General Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema was inaugurated as president on 4 September. However, the duration of this transitional period remains undetermined (Alexander Hudson and David Towriss 2023).

However, unlike previous waves, recent coups have largely been 'smart coups', executed with restraint and minimal bloodshed. Ousted leaders have often been detained for various durations before international pressure leads to their release. In Niger, the military's concern for the president's safety limited its involvement in quelling the coup, according to Sidikou Issa. While earlier coups often involved hidden

interventions by external powers, recent takeovers have carried an anti-imperialist tone, particularly directed against France. This sentiment led to the expulsion of French troops from Mali and sparked similar unrest in Niger. Furthermore, foreign military groups like the Wagner Group were deployed to stabilise Mali and Burkina Faso after coups, with similar expectations in Niger. The coup makers have defied regional and continental norms against unconstitutional changes of government and, in Niger's case, have avoided engagement with ECOWAS. The formation of a 'coup alliance' between Gabon, Niger, and Burkina Faso is significant. Following the coup in Niger, Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Mali pledged support for the junta and threatened retaliation against proposed military intervention by ECOWAS (Atta-Asamoah 2023).

## 5. The coup's dynamics in Niger

The coup in Niger involves complex dynamics that intertwine political, economic, geopolitical, and regional factors, altering the landscape of unity and democratisation in the sub-region. It brings to light profound issues rooted in the historical legacies of colonialism, governance challenges, and external influences such as the US War on Terror. This event underscores the vulnerability of democracy in Niger, highlighting concerns about governance, control over the security sector, and the absence of strong democratic institutions (Zambakari 2023b). The coup can be viewed as a response to economic disparities and a push for more control over Niger's resources. French colonialism has had a lasting influence on the political and economic landscapes of African countries like Niger, fostering deep-rooted issues such as corruption, inequality, and governance problems since their independence (Zambakari 2023b). Additionally, the coup has highlighted the vulnerability of democracy in West Africa, disrupting the stability and democratic progress that President Mohamed Bazoum's leadership had previously symbolised (Zambakari 2023a). Also, Niger's substantial resource capacity, especially its crucial role in meeting Europe's energy demands, notably for France, has underscored the strategic resource tensions in the region. As the seventh-largest uranium producer globally, Niger has been a significant supplier for France for many years. The coup has emphasised the urgent need for the international community to shift its approach towards the region, prioritising economic development and job creation over solely providing security assistance (Bociaga 2023; Zambakari 2023b). In addition, the coup has initiated a significant geopolitical moment for Africans, where the influence of the United States, Russia, France, and China is less critical than the

actions of Africans themselves. Nigeria, the largest nation in the region, has taken a leading role in the crisis, with its new president, Bola Tinubu, serving as the current head of ECOWAS. The participation of regional organisations like ECOWAS and the widespread international condemnation highlight the complexities involved in addressing unconstitutional power seizures (French 2023; Zambakari 2023a). The coup has drawn attention to the strategic resource tensions in West Africa, with neighbouring juntas in Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso expressing their support for the Nigerian junta. The region is now at the heart of geopolitical interests, with major powers eager to secure access to these valuable resources for economic and strategic reasons. The response from ECOWAS and Western partners is vital, as it could include sanctions and affect trade agreements (Bociaga 2023). The coup has altered the dynamics of unity and democratisation in the sub-region, emphasising the necessity for Africans to lead their own processes. The engagement of regional bodies and international partners in crisis mediation underscores the importance of addressing the underlying grievances of marginalised groups, promoting inclusive governance, and fostering economic development. Additionally, the coup has highlighted the urgent need for the international community to shift its approach towards the region, prioritising diplomatic and humanitarian efforts over solely providing security assistance (Zambakari 2023).

## **6. The Underlying Factors of political Turmoil in Niger**

First and foremost, Niger has a significant history of coup attempts, and this latest one marks the fifth successful takeover since the country gained independence in 1960. Recently, democratic institutions were jeopardised by a coup attempt in March 2021, just days before Bazoum's inauguration. The unending events serve as a disheartening reminder of the longstanding factionalism and power struggles that have afflicted both the military and political spheres in Niger in recent years, a destabilising factor that has been underestimated for a long time (Ataman et al. 2023). Analysts believe that the coup is indicative of an internal power struggle, particularly within Niger's security forces. For instance, the head of the presidential guard was appointed by the previous president, revealing divisions among the security forces, notably between Bazoum's supporters and those of the former president (Roll, 2023). While Bazoum led the country democratically, it was far from an ideal democracy. Opposition protesters were frequently imprisoned, and the weak economy kept the nation consistently ranking at the bottom of the UN's Human Development Index. Even the delay in announcing

Tiani's leadership after the coup suggests internal disagreements within the new junta (Roll 2023). Niger shares common challenges with its Sahelian neighbours, including issues of weak governance, insufficient state presence, inadequate infrastructure, and basic service provisions, especially in remote rural areas.

Conversely, Niger emerged as one of the remaining democracies in the Sahel region of Africa where disagreements on how to address Islamist insurgencies resulted in various power struggles, notably in Mali and Burkina Faso. Despite setting itself apart as a 'less problematic partner' for Western allies compared to its Sahelian counterparts, Niger still exhibits a range of structural weaknesses and vulnerabilities that could shed light on recent events and their potential consequences (Ataman et al. 2023).

Moreover, there is no question that the escalation of insecurity and the downturn in economic prospects have contributed to the country's fragility. Even with the surge in foreign troops, particularly from the US and France, and the presence of military bases in Niger, the leadership has failed to prevent insurgent attacks. Various insurgent groups, including Al-Qaeda, Islamic State affiliates, and Boko Haram operate within the country, leading to thousands of deaths and displacements over the past decade (Ajala 2023). In the face of Niger's crucial role as a key ally of Western nations in combating insurgency in the region, France's substantial investments in Niger's mining sector have added another layer of interest in security matters. In 2019, the US, despite facing protests, inaugurated a drone base in Niger, which, while aiding counterinsurgency efforts, carries the risk of making Niger a target for terrorists and exacerbating instability. In 2022, France and other European allies withdrew their forces from Mali, prompting a swift invitation from President Bazoum for them to relocate to Niger. This move faced opposition from the Nigerien military leadership and influential individuals within the country (Ajala 2023). In 2021, the World Bank reported that over 10 million people, constituting approximately 40 per cent of the population, were living in extreme poverty (Worldbank 2021). Niger, a landlocked nation in West Africa, is plagued by extreme poverty and consistently ranks at the lower end of the global Human Development Index (HDI). The country's severe desert climate and scarce water resources lead to persistent food insecurity, which are exacerbated by climate change effects like unpredictable rainfall and increasing desertification. These challenges form a vicious cycle, obstructing progress in living standards and sustainable development (UNDP 2023; World Food Programme 2022; IPCC 2022). Also, a notably high population growth rate has not only fuelled discontent among Nigeriens but has also created favourable conditions for the rise of violent extremism. Niger experienced

its first terrorist attack in May 2013, marking the beginning of a series of incidents that have led to numerous casualties. A report by the Pentagon think tank Africa Center for Strategic Studies indicates a concerning trend in the Sahel region, with the number of violent events involving militant Islamist groups doubling to 2,912 since 2021 (Ataman et al. 2023). Deaths resulting from such attacks nearly tripled to 9,818 during the same period. The report, published in 2023, also highlights over 1,100 attacks on civilians by militants in the region, causing more than 2,080 fatalities (Ataman et al. 2023). The capital city of Niger, Niamey, has not been immune to these challenges.

Nonetheless, Bazoum's election in 2021 marked a relatively calm handover of power, bringing an end to a series of military coups that had persisted since Niger gained independence from France in 1960. However, there were indications that the military leadership in Niger felt they lacked government support in their efforts against militants, and Cameron Hudson, a senior associate at the Center for the Strategic and International Studies, suggested to CNN that a coup might be considered to address this perceived shortfall (Ataman et al. 2023). In addition to these internal concerns, Niger is grappling with the dual challenges of supporting refugees and facing a deepening economic crisis. The country currently shelters around 251,760 refugees, primarily from Nigeria and Mali, where a significant number have fled due to the security crisis in the region, as noted by the UN's refugee agency. To the contrary, the security situation appears to have improved under Bazoum's regime, particularly when compared to Niger's neighbouring countries. In 2022, 90 per cent of the violence related to Islamist extremism in the Sahel region was concentrated in Mali and Burkina Faso. Notwithstanding Niger's comparatively improved security standing, this might not promptly manifest as concrete benefits for, or be recognised as such by, local communities. This situation creates the potential for political and military leaders to exploit it as a narrative, framing and justifying a coup, as highlighted by Méryl Demuyneck and Mathis Böhm (2023). Bazoum's official stance, actively advocating for increased deployment of international troops in Niger, has led to a growing rift in public sentiment. This dissatisfaction is thought to be connected to the population's unmet expectations of external forces. Experts underscore that 'the populations do not understand why the terrorist attacks continue, given the significant resources available to the French forces' (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023), and this sentiment is aggravated by 'disinformation campaigns' portraying Western imperialism as the underlying cause of all issues. Some civil society figures and organisations have voiced their opposition to an increased international presence. One of the most prominent critics is the M62

movement, whose protests were frequently banned or forcefully dispersed under Bazoum's regime but have experienced a resurgence following President Bazoum's removal (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). Incidents like the blockade of a French convoy in Tera in November 2021, resulting in the death of three demonstrators, have indicated and likely intensified the public's dissatisfaction. Similarly, the prohibited march against Barkhane forces on 17 August 2022, highlights stronger anti-French sentiments and popular discontent than suggested by political discourse.

In addition to the factors mentioned earlier, two additional issues play a role in elucidating the recent coup d'état. Firstly, the controversy surrounding Bazoum's ethnicity and legitimacy emerged during the preceding election campaign. Bazoum, hailing from Niger's ethnic Arab minority, faced scrutiny and was consistently characterised as having foreign roots. (Ajala 2023). Despite securing approximately 56 per cent of the vote and belonging to the same political party as former president Mahamadou Issoufou, this narrative didn't sit well within the predominantly larger ethnic groups constituting the military. The military, characterised by a focus on ethnic composition, was uneasy with Bazoum's background, even though Issoufou successfully navigated this dynamic to complete two presidential terms. Notably, military appointments adhere closely to ethnic lines in the country, as highlighted by Olayinka Ajala in 2023.

Secondly, the lack of a decisive response from regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the African Union to military power takeovers in Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Mali empowered the Nigerien military. For example, the lack of decisive action by ECOWAS and the AU against the military governments in Guinea, Burkina Faso, and Mali conveyed that there would be minimal consequences for unconstitutional government changes. This sense of impunity emboldened the Nigerien military to act similarly, assuming they could evade major repercussions for their actions (Cascais 2022; Punch 2023; DIIS 2023; Green 2023). ECOWAS leaders are now indicating a readiness to employ force to reinstall Bazoum if the coup plotters fail to reinstate him. Over the past four years, the region has witnessed seven coup d'états, with three proving successful. Although leaders of ECOWAS and the African Union have issued threats of sanctions against these three nations, there has been limited action to dissuade other opportunistic military leaders (Ajala 2023). For example, Olayinka Ajala (2023) emphasises the necessity for more decisive and coordinated actions by regional organisations such as ECOWAS and the African Union. In particular, it is crucial to implement consistent and enforceable sanctions against coup leaders to prevent future unconstitutional changes in government. ECOWAS was commended in 2017 for its collective military intervention

in Gambia, which compelled President Yahya Jammeh to step down after losing an election (Yusuf 2023). A similar coordinated military intervention by ECOWAS, as a last resort, could effectively deter coup plotters in the region (Reuters 2023). However, countries experiencing coups now consider their crises as internal issues and are defying the long-standing ECOWAS tradition of regional cooperation in establishing norms (Yusuf 2023). Furthermore, there is a need for enhanced diplomatic efforts, involving engagement with both coup leaders and affected populations, to tackle the underlying causes of political instability and prevent future military takeovers (Yusuf 2023). The African Union has already suspended six countries where military forces overthrew civilian governments, including four ECOWAS nations but additional action is needed at the AU level, with involvement from all key stakeholders and the highest political authorities (Yusuf 2023).

## **7. The repercussions resulting from strife and political unrest in Niger**

While those who assumed control in Niamey asserted that they were addressing the escalating security challenges, there is uncertainty regarding their capability to more effectively suppress extremist violence compared to the previous democratically elected leaders. Historical evidence suggests that military takeovers often lead to a worsening of insecurity, as seen in the coups in Mali and Burkina Faso, which resulted in an uptick in terrorist attacks. In the immediate aftermath of a coup, military juntas typically concentrate on consolidating their power in capital cities, diverting attention from counter-terrorism efforts and potentially creating a security vacuum that violent extremist groups may exploit in rural and peripheral areas (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). Nevertheless, elsewhere in the Sahel, the occurrence of coups has bolstered the regional affiliates of Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. Following coups in Mali in 2021 and Burkina Faso in 2022, both Al-Qaeda and Islamic State affiliates in the Sahel have experienced significant reinforcement due to a decline in international security assistance. The impact of these coups in the Sahel is further intensifying the spread of the Salafi-jihadi insurgency. This is primarily attributed to the diversion of security forces towards managing military juntas, the estrangement of international partners, and the mistreatment of civilians. The aftermath of the coups has resulted in the withdrawal of substantial French Forces from both countries, prompting the UN to conclude its decade-long peacekeeping mission in Mali by the close of 2023 (Karr 2023)). However, establishing a stable power base may pose a formidable challenge for the military junta



in Niger. On 26 July 2023 unfolding events revealed internal divisions between the presidential guard and the army, which initially maintained loyalty to President Bazoum. This has raised concerns about potential disloyalty within the military ranks to the new rulers, posing a risk of further disruptions in the region (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). Furthermore, any significant worsening of the nation's security situation could provide jihadists with the chance to take control of a continuous region spanning from Mali to northern Nigeria in the Sahel. Niger, currently caught in the crossfire of various al-Qaeda and Islamic State-affiliated groups in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions, holds the tenth position globally in terms of the impact of terrorism. Additionally, organised banditry along the Nigerian border may escalate into armed rebellion, creating a new front for terrorist organisations active in the country (Crisisgroup 2021). For instance, banditry in northwest Nigeria is driven by a mix of factors, including perceived injustice, governance deficits, weapon proliferation, and extreme poverty. This complexity makes it challenging to address the issue solely through security measures (Ojewale 2024; Ojo, Oyewole, and Aina 2023). Despite experiencing the largest increase in terrorism deaths worldwide in 2021, the nation witnessed an almost 80 per cent decrease in terrorist casualties in 2022 (Barnett, 2023). Sustaining these short-term improvements, attributed by some researchers to increased operations by Nigerien security forces against terrorist groups, may prove challenging due to the ongoing political crisis (Demuyneck and Böhm 2023). Such a scenario could also have devastating ramifications for the coastal West African States, including neighbouring Benin, which experienced its worst year in terms of terrorist violence in 2022. Effective collaboration among Benin, Niger, and Burkina Faso is crucial to address the threat posed by terrorist insurgents reportedly establishing themselves in Park W. This nature reserve, spanning the three countries, could serve as a rear base for these groups to further extend their presence throughout West Africa (Crisisgroup 2023).

Also, the military junta in Niger has defied a deadline set by the ECOWAS on 6 August 2023, to reinstate ousted President Mohamed Bazoum, risking the possibility of military intervention. In response to the junta's refusal to comply with the deadline, both regional and Western allies of Niger have announced a series of sanctions against the country. Niger, known as the world's seventh-largest producer of uranium—a radioactive metal extensively used in nuclear energy and cancer treatment—is paradoxically one of the world's poorest nations, receiving nearly \$2 billion annually in development assistance. According to the 2023 budget projections, out of Niger's total budget of 3,245 billion CFA francs (\$5.53 billion) for the fiscal year, approximately 342.44

billion francs were anticipated from external budget support and loans. Additionally, 978.47 billion francs were expected from project grants and loans provided by external partners. In sum, more than \$2.2 billion constituting around 40 per cent of its budget, was projected to come from external sources and will likely be affected by the sanctions. These sanctions were enforced on Niger following the coup, as reported by Moussa Aksar and Boureima Balima (2023). ECOWAS and the West African Monetary and Economic Union have implemented some of the most rigorous measures against Niger since the coup. The bloc has promptly halted all commercial transactions with Niger, frozen its state assets in the regional central bank, immobilised the assets of the state and state-owned enterprises in commercial banks, and discontinued all financial assistance from regional development banks. These financial sanctions may result in Niger defaulting on its debt repayments. The regional central bank cancelled Niger's planned 30 billion CFA francs (\$51 million) bond issuance in the West African regional debt market following the imposition of sanctions. Niger initially aimed to raise 490 billion CFA francs (\$834 million) from the regional debt market in 2023. ECOWAS sanctions also prompted Nigeria to cut off power supply to Niger on the 80-megawatt Birnin-Kebbi line, while Ivory Coast suspended the import and export of Nigerien goods. The Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), closed its branches in Niger, citing operational risks. The European Union, a major contributor to Niger, has immediately suspended its financial support and security cooperation with Niger (Aksar and Balima 2023). The European Union has dedicated 503 million Euro (\$554 million) from its budget to enhance governance, education, and sustainable growth in Niger from 2021 to 2024, as stated on its website.

In contrast, France, a significant partner, has immediately halted development aid and budgetary support, urging a swift return to constitutional order. French development aid for Niger reached approximately 120 million Euro (\$130 million) in 2022, with expectations of a slight increase in 2023. France, which has 1,500 troops stationed in Niger, turned to the country after withdrawing counterinsurgency forces from Mali and Burkina Faso in 2021 and 2022, respectively. For instance, France's departure from Niger leaves a significant void in the fight against jihadism in the region. The French troops were a key component of the counterinsurgency efforts, and their absence will be felt. This could lead to a decline in the effectiveness of the operations against extremist groups (Asadu 2023). The security situation in the Sahel region is already precarious, and the departure of French troops could embolden extremist groups to launch more attacks. The region accounted for over 40% of extremist deaths

worldwide in 2022, and the French withdrawal could further destabilise the area (Asadu 2023).

The Dutch government, supporting development and security initiatives in Niger, temporarily suspended its direct collaboration with the government in the wake of the coup. The United States, a major contributor of humanitarian and security aid, has paused assistance programs exceeding \$100 million to Niger, urging the junta to reinstate the elected government. The U.S., which has about 1,100 troops in Niger operating from two bases, had previously warned that the coup might lead to a suspension of all cooperation. In fiscal 2023, the U.S. has provided nearly \$138 million in humanitarian assistance. Canada has suspended direct development aid and voiced support for ECOWAS' mediation efforts to restore constitutional order in Niger. The World Bank has halted disbursements until further notice, excluding private-sector partnerships, which will continue cautiously. Niger possesses one of the largest World Bank portfolios in Africa, amounting to \$4.5 billion, and has received \$600 million in direct budget support from the bank between 2022 and 2023 (Aksar and Balima 2023).

However, Abdallah Togola, an employee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Niger, expressed that the current economic and financial sanctions are causing severe repercussions for the local population. Niger is facing increased humanitarian needs due to jihadist activities in its western and southeastern regions, as well as the impact of droughts and floods. Despite being a major uranium supplier, the country has faced exploitation of its resources under unfair terms by France. According to the World Food Programme (WFP), the recent post-coup restrictions could push 7.3 million people from moderate to severe food insecurity, particularly during the traditional 'lean season' between harvests. The imposed blockade lacks humanitarian exemptions, making it challenging for aid agencies to deliver essential supplies for their programmes. Some of these programmes may face suspension in the upcoming weeks, as highlighted by Boureima Balima and Philip Kleinfeld (2023). Aid groups are urging governments to release blocked supplies, but the junta is reluctant to import goods from neighbouring states, suspecting them of amassing troops for a potential military intervention, as reported by aid officials to *The New Humanitarian*.

## 8. Conclusions

In summary, the recent political turmoil in West Africa highlights the urgent necessity for regional entities like ECOWAS and the African Union to take decisive and proactive steps against military power takeovers. The failure to firmly address coups in Guinea,

Burkina Faso, and Mali has not only emboldened the Nigerien military but has also established a risky precedent in the region. The frequent occurrence of successful coup attempts poses a serious threat to the stability and democratic advancement of West African nations. The lukewarm response from ECOWAS and the African Union, despite threats of force and sanctions, raises doubts about the effectiveness of regional bodies in preventing and resolving political crises. As the international community observes events in Niger and the broader West African region, these organisations must re-evaluate their strategies and take more assertive actions to discourage opportunistic military leaders. The recurrent coups in the past four years necessitate a more robust and coordinated regional approach to tackle the underlying causes of political instability. Inaction risks further undermining democratic values and governance structures in the region. The leaders of ECOWAS and the African Union must move beyond mere rhetoric and implement concrete measures not only to punish coup perpetrators but also to actively prevent the recurrence of such incidents. The credibility of the international community in promoting democracy and stability in West Africa depends on the effectiveness of regional responses to these challenges.

## 9. Way forward

The situation in Niger is intricate, necessitating a comprehensive strategy for a sustainable resolution. Possible approaches involve tackling root causes such as inadequate governance, poverty, and inter-communal conflicts. To achieve lasting results, it is imperative for the international community to assist the Nigerien government, deliver humanitarian aid, and ensure fair resource distribution, as emphasised by USAID (2023) and the UN (2023). Also, a potential resolution for the conflict in Niger involves negotiation. The citizens of Niger have endured persistent threats to their lives and well-being due to issues like weak governance and inter-communal conflicts, as noted by the UN (2023). The Nigerien authorities have actively worked towards resolving entrenched intercommunal conflicts in Ouallam and Banibangou, areas previously heavily impacted by violence, according to ACLED (2023). To enhance this negotiated approach, there is a call for increased international support to facilitate consensus-building among Niger's democratic stakeholders and to strengthen the involvement of regional and international organisations, as emphasised by Oluwatimilehin Sotubo (2023). Lastly, promoting community cohesion in Niger can be achieved through the implementation of conflict mitigation tools. In the local context, residents regard

their village and regional chiefs as the most esteemed figures for resolving issues. Collaborating with these authorities, the Nigerien government can foster community unity and tackle inter-communal conflicts, as suggested by USAID (2023).

## References

- ABC. 2023. Niger's military announces ousting of President Bazoum in apparent coup. Available at: <https://abcnews.go.com/International/nigers-military-announces-ousting-president-bazoum-apparent-coup/story?id=101709266> (Accessed: 22 June 2024)
- ACLED (2023) Fact sheet: Military coup in Niger. Available at: <https://acleddata.com/2023/08/03/fact-sheet-military-coup-in-niger> (Accessed at: 20 June 2024)
- Africa Center for Strategic Study (2023)-Attempted coup in Niger: Background. Available at: <https://africacenter.org/spotlight/attempted-coup-in-niger-an-explainer/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Ajala, O. 2023. *What caused the coup in Niger? An expert outlines three driving factors*. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/what-caused-the-coup-in-niger-an-expert-outlines-three-driving-factors-210721> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Aksar, M. and Balima, B. 2023. Niger loses aid as Western countries condemn coup. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/niger-loses-aid-western-countries-condemn-coup-2023-07-29/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Annor, I. 2023. *Does Niger's coup affirm democratic backsliding theories in West Africa?* Available at: <https://www.voaafrica.com/a/does-nigers-coup-affirm-democratic-backsliding-theories-in-west-africa-/7202180.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Asadu, C. 2023. France's withdrawal from Niger could jeopardize counterterrorism operations in the Sahel. Available at: <https://apnews.com/article/niger-sahel-france-us-coup-counterterrorism-ce19912950c6641e0281d8a10741a8de> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Ataman, J., Madowo, L., Hu, C., Faqiri, S. and Noor Haq, S. CNN. 2023. *Europeans evacuated from Niger as neighboring West African juntas warn against intervention*. Available at: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/08/01/africa/niger-coup-europe-evacuations-intl/index.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Atta-Asamoah, A. 2023. Africa's three waves of coups. Available at: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/africas-three-waves-of-coups> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Barka, H.B. & Ncube, M. 2012. *Political Fragility in Africa: Are military coups d'Etat a never-*

- ending phenomenon?* African Development Fund, African Development Bank.
- Bermeo, N. 2016. *On Democratic Backsliding*. Available at: <https://journalofdemocracy.org/articles/on-democratic-backsliding/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Bociaga, R. 2023. *Niger's coup uncovers strategic resource tensions in West Africa*. Available at: [https://www.arabnews.com/node/2350626/business-economy\\_](https://www.arabnews.com/node/2350626/business-economy_) (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Boucher, A. 2019. *Guinea at a crossroads*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies. <https://www.africacenter.org/spotlight/guinea-at-a-crossroads> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Carothers, T. and Press, B. 2022. *Understanding and responding to global democratic backsliding*. Available at: <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2022/10/understanding-and-responding-to-global-democratic-backsliding?lang=en> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Cascais, A. 2022. ECOWAS criticized over West African coups. Available at: <https://www.dw.com/en/ecowas-criticized-over-west-african-coups/a-61685721> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Choudhury, S. (n.d.). *Niger coup sheds light on wider challenges across African nations*. [weeklyblitz.net](http://weeklyblitz.net)
- Chin, J.J. and Kirkpatrick, J. 2023. African coups in the COVID-19 era: A current history. *Frontiers in Political Science*, 5: 01-20. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2023.1077945>
- Crisisgroup. 2021. South-western Niger: Preventing a new insurrection. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/niger/301-sud-ouest-du-niger-prevenir-un-nouveau-front-insurrectionnel> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Crisisgroup. 2023. Containing militancy in West Africa's Park W. Available at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/sahel/burkina-faso-niger-benin/310-containing-militancy-west-africas-park-w> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Decalo, S. 1976. *Coups and army rule in Africa: Motivations and constraints*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Demuyne, M. and Böhm, M. 2023. *Unravelling the Niger coup and its implications for violent extremism in the Sahel*. Available at: <https://www.icct.nl/publication/unravelling-niger-coup-and-its-implications-violent-extremism-sahel> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- DIIS. 2023. Danish institute for international studies. 'The politics of coups' shape the response to West Africa's military juntas. Available at: <https://www.diis.dk/en/node/26399> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Duzor, M. and Williamson, B. 2023. *Coups in Africa*. Available at: <https://projects.voanews.com/african-coups/> (Accessed at: 20 June 2024)
- Falola, T. (2022). *Are coups back in Africa?* Premium Times. Available at: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/1000000/are-coups-back-in-africa/>

- premiumtimesng.com/opinion/508569-are-coups-back-in-africa-by-toyin-falola.html?tztc=1 (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- French, H.W. 2023. *Niger's coup is a turning point for Africans*. Available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/08/08/niger-coup-ecowas-nigeria-tinubu-regional-cooperation-multilateralism-statebuilding> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Green, M. 2023. *Coups in Africa, Even in ECOWAS*. Available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/coups-africa-even-ecowas> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Hjelmgaard, K. 2023. *There were 13 military coups in Africa in recent years. Why does this keep happening?* Available at: <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2023/07/29/niger-coups-in-africa/70475841007/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Hudson, A. 2023. David Towriss-Two more coups in Africa: Similarities, differences, and what comes next Available at: <https://www.idea.int/blog/two-more-coups-africa-similarities-differences-and-what-comes-next> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- IPCC. 2022. Climate change 2022: Impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability. Retrieved from IPCC.
- James Barnett. 2023. *Niger's coup is a West African disaster in the making*. Available at: <https://www.hudson.org/security-alliances/niger-coup-west-african-disaster-making-wagner-james-barnett> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Isilow, H. 2023. *FACTBOX – Recent coups in Africa*. Available at: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/factbox-recent-coups-in-africa/2979254> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Karolewski, I. P. 2020. *Towards a political theory of democratic backsliding? Generalising the East Central European experience*. Available at: [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-54674-8\\_13](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-54674-8_13). (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Karr, L. 2023. Salafi-Jihadi Movement Update Special Edition. *Niger coup threatens West counterterrorism efforts and could offer opportunities to Russia*. Available at: <https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/salafi-jihadi-movement-update-special-edition-niger-coup-threatens-western-counterterrorism-efforts-and-could-offer-opportunities-to-russia> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Luckham, R. 1971. *The Nigerian military: A sociological analysis of authority & revolt 1960-67*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- MacDougall, C. (2022). A coup within a coup leaves Burkina Faso in uncharted territory. *World Politics Review*. Available at: <https://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/burkina-faso-militarycoup-sahel-region-crisis> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Maclean, R. 2022. *Military Officers Announce Coup in Burkina Faso*. New York Times. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/30/world/africa/burkina-faso>

- coup.html (Accessed on: 20 June 2024)
- Martin, M. and Lebovich, A. 2022. *Political Instability in Africa's Sahel region is tied to rising extremism*. NPR. Available at: <https://www.npr.org/2022/01/29/1076730040/political-instability-in-africas-sahel-region-is-tied-to-rising-extremism> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- McGowan, P.J. (2003). African military coups d'état, 1956–2001: Frequency, trends and distribution. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41(3): 339-370.
- Mehler, A. 2009. The coup d'état in the Central African Republic, 2003. In J. Straus (Ed.), *The Patterns of Mass Violence in Africa*, edited by J. Strauss. Place of publication: Ohio University Press. Pp. 53-76.
- Morris, Z.S. 2009. The truth about interviewing elites. *Politics*, 29(3): 209–217. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9256.2009.01357.x> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Munshi, N. 2022. Burkina Faso leader toppled in coup. *Financial Times*, p.8.
- Mutibwa, P.M. 1992. *Uganda since independence: A story of unfulfilled hopes*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press.
- Ojewale, O. 2024. *Northwest Nigeria has a banditry problem. What's driving it?* Available at: <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/05/northwest-nigeria-has-a-banditry-problem-whats-driving-it/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Ojo, J.S., Oyewole, S. and Aina, F. 2023. Forces of terror: Armed banditry and insecurity in North-west Nigeria. *Democracy and Security*, 19(4): 319-346. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17419166.2023.2164924> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Okechukwu, N. 2023. The fragility of the African governance agenda: A crisis of legitimacy. Available at: <https://ecdpm.org/work/fragility-african-governance-agenda-crisis-legitimacy> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Pazzanita, A.G. 2008. *Historical dictionary of Mauritania*. Place of publishing: Scarecrow Press.
- Pinkney, R. 1972. *Ghana under military rule, 1966-1969*. Place of publication: Methuen.
- Powell, J. M., and Thyne, C.L. (2011). *Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset*. *Journal of Peace Research* 48(2):249-259. DOI: 10.1177/0022343310397436
- Punch. 2023. *Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger coups fuelling insecurity in West Africa – ECOWAS*. Available at: <https://punchng.com/burkina-faso-mali-niger-coups-fuelling-insecurity-in-west-africa-ecowas/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Rakotomalala, O. and Chothia, F. 2022. *Capt Ibrahim Traore: Burkina Faso's new military*



- ruler. BBC News.
- Reuters. 2023. *Does Niger's coup affirm democratic backsliding theories in West Africa?* Available at: <https://www.voaafrica.com/a/does-nigers-coup-affirm-democratic-backsliding-theories-in-west-africa-/7202180.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Reuters. 2023. *Analysts: Niger president's assertive push for reforms led to coup.* Available at: <https://www.voaafrica.com/a/analysts-niger-president-s-assertive-push-for-reforms-led-to-coup/7213880.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Roll, N. 2023. *Despite anti-coup rhetoric, can the West exit Niger, its latest Sahel hub?* Available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2023/7/28/despite-anti-coup-rhetoric-can-the-west-exit-niger-its-latest-sahel-hub> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Rosenje, M.O., Onyebuchi, U.J. and Adeniyi, O.P. n.d.. Tenure elongation and democratic consolidation in Africa: Lessons from the 2021 coup d'état in Guinea. *Benue Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*: 253-272.
- Sotubo, O. 2023. *ECOWAS: In need of help in Niger?* Available at: <https://www.rand.org/pubs/commentary/2023/08/ecowas-in-need-of-help-in-niger.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Suleiman, M.D. and Onapajo, H. 2022. *Why West Africa has had so many coups and how to prevent more.* The Conversation. Available at: <https://theconversation.com/why-west-africa-hashad-so-many-coups-and-how-to-prevent-more-176577> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Suleiman, M.D. 2021. Towards a better understanding of the underlying conditions of coups in Africa. *E-international Relations*. Available at: <https://www.e-ir.info/2021/09/24/towards-a-better-understanding-of-the-underlying-conditions-of-coups-in-africa/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- UN. 2023. In niger, farmers and pastoralists work together to resolve dispute.
- World Bank. 2021. *The World Bank in Niger.* Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/niger/overview> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- UNDP. 2023. *Human Development Report 2023.* Retrieved from UNDP
- USAID. 2023. *Conflict mitigation tools contribute to community cohesion in Dosso, Niger.* Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/stabilization-and-transitions/our-stories/jan-31-2023-conflict-mitigation-tools-contribute-community-cohesion-dosso-niger> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- United States Institute of Peace. 2022. *Countering coups in the Greater Sahel.* Available at: <https://www.usip.org/events/countering-coups-greater-sahel> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)

- Yusuf, M. 2023. *ECOWAS Unity Put to Test as West African Coup Crisis Deepens*. Available at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/ecowas-unity-put-to-test-as-west-african-coup-crisis-deepens-/7263280.html> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Zambakari, C. 2023a Military coup in Niger: The legacies of colonialism and the US war on terror in West Africa. Available at: <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/military-coup-in-niger-the-legacies-of-colonialism-and-the-us-war-on-terror-in-west-africa/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Zambakari, C. 2023b. Military Coup in Niger: The Legacies of Colonialism and the US War on Terror Warrant a New Approach to Security in West Africa. Available at: <https://gppreview.com/2023/08/31/military-coup-in-niger-the-legacies-of-colonialism-and-the-us-war-on-terror-warrant-a-new-approach-to-security-in-west-africa/> (Accessed: 20 June 2024)
- Zulueta-Fulscher, K. and Noel, T. n.d. The 2021 coup pandemic: Post-coup transitions and international responses. *Annual Review of Constitution Building*: 74-104.